

OUR BOYS

AND GIRLS

# The Junior Four

By Ralph Henry Barbour



The Driver Deposited His Burden Just Inside and Growled "Fifty Cents."

CHAPTER I.  
THE train that bore Bert Bryant from his home in Clinton, Ohio, to New York was two hours late at the end of its journey, for all the way the snow had been from three inches to a foot in depth. Consequently Bert had missed the one o'clock train to Mount Pleasant and spent an hour in the Grand Central Station with his nose to a waiting room window watching with interested gaze the bustle and confusion of the great city. Now, at four o'clock, he was seated in a sleigh, suitcase beside him, winding up the snowy road to Mount Pleasant Academy. In the front seat were the furled driver and Bert's small trunk. It was very cold and fast growing dark. It seemed to Bert that they had been driving for miles and miles, and he wanted to ask the driver how much further they had to go. But the driver was cross and taciturn, and so Bert buried his hands deeper in his pockets and wondered whether his nose and ears were getting white. And just when he had decided to reach out for a handful of snow to rub them with the sleigh left the main road with a sudden lurch that very nearly toppled the trunk off and turned through a gate and up a curving drive lined with snow laden evergreens. Then the academy came into view, a rambling, comfortable looking building, with many cheerful, lighted windows. The sleigh pulled up in front of a broad stone step and Bert clambered out, bag in hand. The driver lifted the trunk, opened the big oak door without ceremony, deposited his burden just inside and growled:—"Fifty cents."

Bert paid him, the door closed, the bells jingled dimly down the drive and Bert looked around. He was in a big hall from which a broad stairway ascended and from which doors opened on all sides. Through one of them he caught sight of three tables already set for supper. The hall was evidently a living room as well, for a wood fire crackled in a big fireplace and easy chairs and couches were all around, while the floor was spread with a number of rugs of varying sizes whose deep tones

blaze. Somehow the place didn't look like any school he had ever seen, and he began to wonder whether by mistake he had stumbled into some one's private house. But from above came unmistakable sounds—boys' voices in laughter and the scurrying of feet. Bert began to study the many closed doors, intending presently, if no one came, to knock at one of them. But before he had made a choice some one did come. A door behind him opened suddenly and a girl of fourteen burst in, caught sight of the newcomer and paused in surprise. Bert turned, and for a moment the two observed each other in frank curiosity. What Bert saw was a girl in a sailor suit of some dark blue material, a girl with a pretty, animated face, blue eyes and golden brown hair which at the back descended to her waist in a heavy braid. What the girl saw was a good looking boy of her own age with a sturdy figure, a pleasant countenance, brown eyes and hair and a good supply of freckles.

"Hello!" she said finally.  
"How do you do?" responded Bert.  
"You're the new junior, aren't you?" she went on. "I forgot your name. Mine's Nan. Doctor Merton's my father."  
"My name is Albert Bryant. I didn't see any one about—"

"Daddy's talking with Mr. Crane in the office, mamma's in the village and Mr. Folsom hasn't come back yet. I'm all there is, you see, and so you'll have to put up with me until daddy's ready for you. I guess it was pretty cold driving up from the station, wasn't it?"

"It was, rather," acknowledged Bert, rubbing his fingers together. "I was late in New York and so I missed the train I was expecting to get."

Nan nodded. "Lots of the boys were late. Two of them haven't got here yet. Mr. Folsom, too. He lives in Syracuse and there's been heaps of snow up that way. I like snow, though, don't you? We've got a dandy toboggan slide. Do you like to toboggan?"

"I never tried it," answered Bert. "I should think, though, it would be good fun."

"It's grand! Did the Pirate bring you up?"

"The Pirate?"  
"Mr. Higgins. The boys call him the Pirate, because he looks like one. I know he did, though, because he's put your trunk as near the door as he could. He says he doesn't get paid to handle trunks inside the house. Did you say your name was Albert?"  
"Yes; Bert, though, usually."

"I like that better," she responded, seating herself on the arm of a chair and continuing to examine him calmly. "I shall call you Bert, though I suppose the boys will find a nickname for you pretty soon. Funny you came after Christmas recess. Why didn't you come in the fall?"

"I was going to, but I got sick in September and then it was too late. And mother thought I'd better wait and get quite well."

"You don't look sick now," she said, critically.

"I'm not. I never was sick before, not really sick, that is."

"You're to room with Ben Holden. I hope he will like you. He's a senior."

"Why don't you hope I'll like him?" laughed Bert.

Nan merton raised her eyebrows. "Oh, that isn't so important. You see, if Ben shouldn't like you he might make your life a veritable burden (Bert soon discovered that Nan was fond of using queer phrases which she got out of the stories she read). He—he's that sort, you know."

"Is he? Well, I shouldn't like to have my life a burden," replied Bert with a smile. "How old is this chap?"  
"Ben? He's seventeen, I think. He's one of the big boys. We have eleven here in the house, four seniors, two upper middle, two lower middle and three juniors—no, four, now you've come. You see, the



For a Moment the Two Observed Each Other in Frank Curiosity.

junior sort of do what the seniors and upper middle tell them to."

"Oh, well, suppose they didn't?" asked Bert.

"Why—why?"—But such a supposition seemed beyond Nan's imagination. "They have to," she said. There was the sound of a closing door somewhere. "Mr. Crane's gone. Come on and I'll take you to daddy."

She led the way through the door by which she had entered, across a somewhat formal room furnished as a parlor and thence into a hallway. This, as Bert guessed correctly, was the family's part of the house. The office door was open, and Bert followed Nan inside.

"Here's the new boy, daddy," she announced in businesslike tones. A middle aged gentleman, grained of hair and comfortably stout, arose from his desk chair and turned to Bert with a kindly smile and outstretched hand.

"Glad to see you, Bryant. You had a pleasant journey, I hope. That was quite a trip for a boy of your age to make alone. Let me see, now, you're fifteen, is it?"  
"Fourteen, sir."

"Ah, yes. And you're going into the junior grade. I remember. Well, Mrs. Merton is absent and so I'll show you your room myself. Later we'll have a talk together. Come this way, Bryant."

Bert rescued his bag, coat and cap in the hall and followed the Doctor up the stairs. In front of a partly open door the Doctor paused and knocked.

"Come in!" called a voice gayly. When they entered Bert saw five boys lounging about the room. At sight of the Doctor, however, they all sprang respectfully to their feet.

"Ben," announced the Doctor, "this is your new room mate, Albert Bryant. Bryant, this is Benson Holden. And here is Lovell and Perkins and Pierce and Waters." Bert shook hands all around. "Make Bryant at home, boys," continued the Doctor. "One of you might give him a hand with his trunk, if you will. Everything all right, Ben?"  
"Yes, sir, thank you."

The Doctor withdrew and Bert was left facing the curious and critical glances of the five seniors. It was Benson Holden who first broke the ensuing silence. Ben dropped on the bed, threw out his hands in utter despair and nodded at Bert.

"Look!" he yelled. "Look what the cat's brought in!"  
(To Be Continued.)



## SPEAR TILTING A JOLLY SPORT FOR BOYS

Good Form at the Start



An Exciting Moment

A N awfully interesting game played or outdoors, is that of spear tilting, by the Boy Scouts, and which any boys may learn to play, either indoors or outdoors, is that of spear tilting, which, as you will see by the pictures, is a most exciting form of sport.

All that is necessary for an equipment for the sport is a pair of barrels or kegs on which to stand and two spears like those in the pictures. Old ice cream barrels are used for the stands of the boys here pictured. Any sort of barrel, however, will do, provided that both barrels are of equal height.

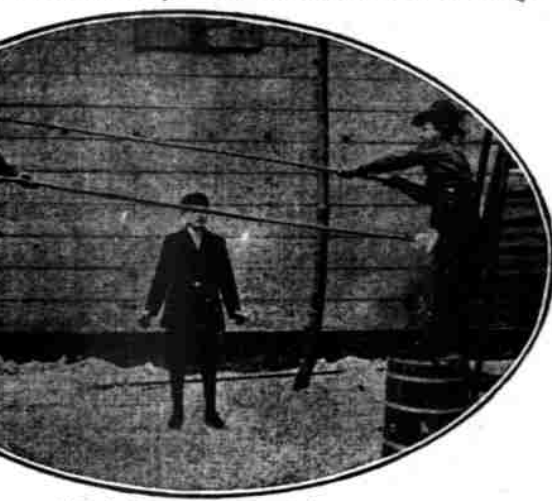
The spears are made of long fishing poles, over the ends of which are twisted wooden disks. These are cut from old pieces of wood, and holes are made in the centre just large enough to make them fasten firmly on the ends of the poles. Then the ends of the poles are padded, and white rags are fastened over the padding and tied down the other side of the wooden piece. This holds the rags firmly in place and thus makes a very good padded spear.

The first position for the spear fight is shown in one of the pictures. The object of the fight is to knock one's opponent off the barrel. Every time a boy is knocked off it counts two for his opponent. The score may be seven, eleven or thirteen points.

If a boy strikes his opponent below the belt or in the face it is considered a foul, and he is obliged to throw up his defensive spear, permitting his opponent every opportunity to push him off the barrel. If, however, the opponent fails to push him off, the first boy loses nothing by the foul. Some boys allow one point for each time an opponent is unbalanced, even if he is not put off the barrel.

The barrels must be eight feet apart, and the spears are eight feet long. There must be an umpire for the rounds, and it is well to have a boy standing back of each barrel to catch the spearmen as they fall.

**A Pencil for a Coat Hanger.**  
Take an ordinary pencil and fit it into a groove in the moulding of a door. You must jam it in hard and thrust it up about a foot. This will make the pencil stick to the door groove so hard that you can hang your coat on the pencil point. The pencil sticks so fast because the friction developed by pushing it up in the groove melts the varnish on the pencil and the varnish on the door sufficiently to make them stick together.



A Foul—Struck Below the Belt



Off the Barrel Means Two Points Lost



### Answer to Girls' Name Puzzle.

The girls' names represented in last week's puzzle were: Grace, Adelaide (add L sds), Mabel (May bell), Virginia, Mary (Major E), Eleanor (L N car).

## GIRL'S NAME PUZZLE

Each One of These Pictures Represents the Name of a Girl.

